



Shrewsbury Public Schools

Patrick C. Collins, Assistant Superintendent for Finance & Operations

23 September 2015

To: School Committee

RE: 2015-2016 TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Background

For nearly 70% of our students, each school day begins and ends with a ride on a bus. Reliable, safe, and efficient service are universal goals of school bus transportation operations.

Each year, shortly after school opening, the committee receives an update on the transportation services offered by the district along with some specific information on ridership and the fee-based program. This document and the associated presentation offer lots of data and details with respect to ridership and finances of our operations.

General Information

The level of transportation services offered by the district are regulated and guided by state law [MGL c. 71, s.68], school committee policy, and the approval of each year's operating budget. The district not only transport students to Shrewsbury Public Schools but is also mandated to provide a similar level of service to students who reside in Shrewsbury and attend Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved private schools located in Shrewsbury. Further, we are required to provide transportation to students who attend Assabet Valley Regional Technical High School and to special education students who have transportation required as part of their Individualized Education Program.

Busing service is provided for free at the statutory minimums [K-6 students who reside greater than two miles from school] and offered for a fee to all other students.

Specific Information

There is a variety of detailed information enclosed in the *Powerpoint* presentation. In addition, the chart on the succeeding page depicts a multi-year set of ridership and fee revenue information. Factors that impact each year of ridership and revenue are shifts in student enrollment, changes in eligibility for free or reduced price lunch, and the economy in general.

	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16 prelim.
Total Bus Riders	4,622	4,578	4,539	4,586	4,577	4,547
Percent Change		-1.0%	-0.9%	1.0%	-0.2%	-0.7%
Total Regular Fees	\$ 594,715	\$ 592,290	\$ 585,742	\$ 572,185	\$ 600,674	\$ 593,076
Percent Change		-0.4%	-1.1%	-2.3%	5.0%	-1.3%
Late Fees	\$ 15,500	\$ 12,835	\$ 16,350	\$ 18,600	\$ 12,400	\$ 22,800
Percent Change		-17.2%	27.4%	13.8%	-33.3%	83.9%
Students Paying Late Fee	310	256	327	372	248	456
Percent Change		-17.4%	27.7%	13.8%	-33.3%	83.9%
Total Fees Collected	\$ 610,215	\$ 605,125	\$ 602,092	\$ 590,785	\$ 613,074	\$ 615,876
Percent Change		-0.8%	-0.5%	-1.9%	3.8%	0.5%
Paying Riders	2,337	2,354	2,343	2,289	2,180	2,242
Percent Change		0.7%	-0.5%	-2.3%	-4.8%	2.8%

Recurring Issues

With respect to the start of the school year, there is always a few days of “shakeout” before each route stabilizes and refines its schedule working towards consistency. We experienced some typical lateness of some buses and a couple maintenance issues delaying buses. But on the whole, the year began well and I appreciate the efforts of our Transportation and Security Coordinator, Steve Rocco, along with the AA Transportation Terminal Manager, Sean Lyonnaise, and all of our drivers.

Despite the proactive and repetitive communication efforts of the district to urge parents to register their child for service before the deadline, we continue to receive a large influx of registrations in late August and into early September. The influx is managed with the support of most Central Office support staff especially Dotty Flynn and some measure of overtime hours to meet the peak demand. It has also caused unexpected routing problems, last minute changes, resulting in negative experiences for parents, students, bus drivers, and Central Office staff.

Currently, our online registration system is through *PowerSchool* but our payment system is completely “manual” and separate from registration. I will be pursuing an online solution compatible with *PowerSchool* that combines registration and payments as part of a singular process. The goal is to make it more “user friendly” for parents but also reduce the amount of administrative tasks associated with receiving and recording individual payments. This is a rather complex technical project that also requires the cooperation of the Town Treasurer who maintains responsibility for all receipts and banking relationships. My goal is to pilot a launch of a new system in the winter so it is readied for the 2016-2017 school year.